

# MEDICAL MUSE

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*A literary journal devoted to the inquiries, experiences, and meditations of the  
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center community*



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# MEDICAL MUSE

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Submissions may be literary or visual, and may include letters to the editor. Participation from all members of the UNM Health Sciences Center community.

Electronic submissions may be sent via e-mail attachment to: [medicalmuse@salud.unm.edu](mailto:medicalmuse@salud.unm.edu). Please include name and contact information.

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We are pleased to bring you this edition of the Medical Muse. This semiannual arts journal is meant to provide a creative outlet for members of the greater Health Sciences Center community: patients, practitioners, students, residents, faculty, staff, and families. In this business of the scrutiny of bodies and minds, it can be all too easy to neglect an examination of our own lives. This journal is a forum for the expression of meditation, narrative, hurting and celebration — all the ways in which we make sense of what we see and do.

It is our hope that in these pages you will encounter a range of experience, from the outrageous to the sublime. What we have in common binds and steadies us, yet there is much to be learned from the unfamiliar.

The Muse exists to encourage members of the Health Sciences community to express their creativity. Occasionally, subject matter may be controversial. It is never our intent to offend, however we wish to explore the full range of experiences reflected in our submissions.

Unfortunately, due to space constraints we cannot publish every work that is submitted in the print copy. We wish it to be known that our worst fear is that in selecting submissions we are discouraging the same creativity we wish to foster. We therefore sincerely thank all those who have submitted in the past and ask that you continue doing so.

Without your creativity and courage to share, the Muse would not exist.

– The Editorial Board



**On the cover:**  
*Unexpected Reflections*  
Gary Smith



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**Contributing Photographers:** Jonathan Bolton, Christina Hoff, Zachary Jacobs, Adam Quinn Kludt, Lynn Lessard, José Sandoval, Gary Smith





## Letter from the Editor

It is with great pleasure we present the summer edition of the Muse. My many thanks to our team – Laura Hall, Michael Haederle, Sahar Freedman, Jill Bolton, Erin Roth and Gail Case – for making this work possible with tireless editing and layout, resulting in a beautiful product. A special thank you to Laura Hall for her limitless energy and love for the Medical Muse. We wouldn't be able to create such art without the financial support of Dean Paul Roth and university leadership. Our many thanks...

As an academic surgeon for almost three decades and a lover of art for almost six, I see the need for the Medical Muse even more with the challenges of medicine. The many pressures of work and a crucial need for life balance for all practioners of healing gives the Medical Muse and this edition even more value. I call your attention to this issues's lovely photographs and poetry. There are also four pieces by senior and junior clinicians discussing personal happiness with thoughts of improvement and equity. I congratulate all of the contributors of the Medical Muse for their beautiful work.

It is in the spirit of life balance, professionalism and happiness that we must continue to find ways to work together with great spirit and graciousness. I think back to one of my fellows who complimented the department on having "Harmony," and I look to this word as a way for all of us to stay committed to our patients and to ourselves. I recently reflected on the fullness of my life and my work while fly fishing in Northern New Mexico and I am grateful to be the editor in chief of the Medical Muse and look forward to our future at the University of New Mexico.

Best wishes for the summer and fall.

– Robert C. Schenck Jr, MD  
Editor-in-Chief





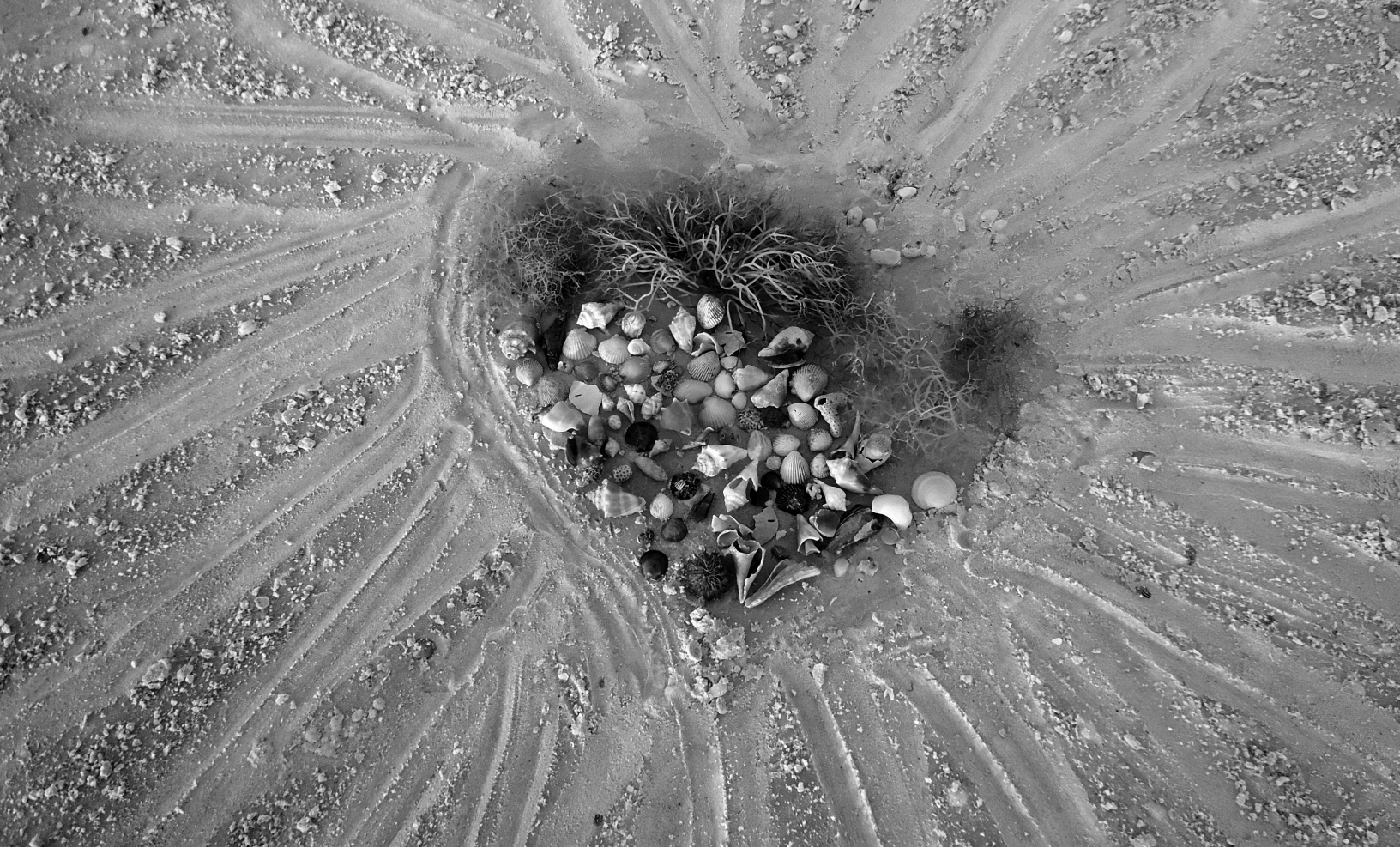
Adam Quinn Kludt

## Indelible

I threw some words out  
carelessly,  
And meant them for the moment.  
You picked them up  
deliberately,  
And remembered them forever.

– Gale G. Hannigan





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## Happiness at 60

By Martha Cole McGrew

I'm 59. My dad died when he was 33, and my mom died when she was 84. I was darn happy when I made it to 34, almost two years after my first daughter was born. Although I am not sure that I totally believed that I, too, would die at 33, there was a sigh of relief as I nursed my daughter while saying a great big thank you to the universe, because there was no way I believed I would die at 34 if I hadn't died at 33.

This year I will be 60, which is about one year more than the average age of my parents' deaths. Now, my maternal grandparents lived to their 90s and my paternal grandmother into her 80s. My paternal grandfather died in a milling accident at a much younger age than that, but because I don't have any plans to work in a sawmill, I am pretty safe there.

All this is to say that I spend more time than I used to thinking about age and my bucket list.

I said to my daughter not long ago that I probably only had 25 or so more Christmases left, more or less. She was horrified. I am not sure if it was me or Santa Claus that she was most grieving (because she still has this silly idea that we might be one and the same, although I keep assuring her that it is not so).

Most likely, I'll just be passing on treasures as Christmas gifts as I grow older: the beautiful trunk that my father carried his belongings in to medical school in 1952 and that my mother had refinished for me one Christmas, quilts made by my mother and grandmothers that I still sleep under, a watch that I treasure, a sapphire ring with a shady history



and some of the most enchanting and beautiful Southern folk art I have collected over the years.

All this “giving away,” of course, is in preparation for my entry into some kind of assisted living, where one can keep few of one’s treasures and then into the great beyond, where it is unheard of to carry much of anything (although I did slip a picture of my daughters into my mother’s casket in hopes she could somehow take it with her.)

Of late, I spend a fair amount of time trying to put together the pieces of the time puzzle that remain in my life. I think it is related to the number of people in my sphere of existence who have died over the past eight years, beginning with my mighty mother, then my generous stepfather and most recently, the beloved mother of my sister-in-law.

There have also been colleagues and friends and Harper Lee and David Bowie, and in the last couple of years three of my beloved pets have died. (I hope the reader realizes that all of those animals you get when your kids are 6 to 10 years old pass on at about the same time when your kids are in their early 20s and the animals have become yours.) I will be in deep grief when Eric Clapton strums no more.

I recently read an article that noted that physicians rarely choose the end-of-life heroic treatments they recommend for their patients, and I am one of those docs. I used to be afraid of dying, but now I have moved to a different place. I am not afraid of dying myself, but afraid of leaving my daughters, who are tender young women not yet ready to be without their mother. Can anyone ever be? I miss my mother every day and cry for her more regularly than I care to admit. I live with a persistent, slightly below-the-surface anxiety that the couple who have been my “extra” parents and spiritual nurturers will leave me an orphan in my sixties before I am ready to say good-bye.

So, I am going to aim for at least 85, and that gives me 25 years, more or less. I’m

reading Gretchen Rubin’s book, *The Happiness Project*, and from what I can tell, I am doing pretty good. Her first chapter is on energy. I am doing well there, except in the area of getting at least seven hours of sleep a night. My mother was a good mother, but she could have done a better job at making me go to bed.

I didn’t learn to fall asleep very well, but I’m doing fine with exercise, acting energetic even when I don’t feel it, eating well, and simplifying my world. I could stand to lose a few pounds, but I don’t even feel that urgency at 60 and because one of my researcher colleagues said fit makes up for a lot, and I am that!

I hear that there are real studies that show that if you ask folks in their nineties which decade was the happiest, they say their 70s. So I am thinking a lot about happiness and what makes me happy, after spending a lot of my life trying to make other people happy (which is admirable but truly impossible, as happiness is self-generated). I’ve been considering what kind of happiness is going to work for me for the next 25 years.

I doubt I will climb Kilimanjaro after two rotator cuff surgeries and a hip muscle repair (not to mention a fear of heights), but I will go to Africa, Southeast Asia and the Kentucky Derby.

Mastering a musical instrument is doubtful. When I was in high school I learned to play the clarinet (poorly) because I wanted to be a majorette in the band. I could awesomely twirl a fire baton – the key there is not to wear nylon hose for the performance unless you want to melt the skin on your legs.

I am pretty darn good at making quilts and love that, though they are not worthy of a state fair blue ribbon and they are machine quilted, which my mother reminded me is not “real” quilting since she hand-stitched and hand-quilted all of her quilts.

A couple of years ago I delivered the last baby I will probably ever deliver, after 30



years of helping mamas birth babies. Now, that is happiness. I hope my daughters will let me come if they have babies, but they get to choose that and I will be happy either way.

These days my quest is for the simpler things in life that bring deep happiness. For some crazy reason, one of the things that gives me the most joy is having my daughters send me their essays, personal statements and applications to read and critique. It gives me an intimate and beautiful insight into what is going on in their lives and in a subtle way lets me know that they value what I think.

I love planting time each spring. Can there be anything better than sowing tomato seeds and reaping that first ripe tomato, slicing it into thick slabs, spreading soft, white Wonder bread with real Duke's mayonnaise, and making a first-tomato-of-the-year sandwich that drips down your shirt as you eat it? No other tomato sandwich of the season tastes as good as that first tomato sandwich.

Traveling gives me great joy, whether it is home to Louisiana to see family and friends and eat crawfish, or to Paris to flaneur about,

try on exquisite perfumes or have a glass of champagne paired with one exquisite chocolate or macaron.

The Florida Gulf Coast is my happiest place in the world. It nearly brings me to tears to arrive there each summer to that sugar-white sand on the Redneck Riviera.

I love music more these days . . . gospel music from the Cokesbury Hymnal and Jay-Z singing "Empire State of Mind" or Martha Argerich playing Chopin. I am going to read a lot of books, many of which I already own and just can't keep up with reading. I am going to read a Faulkner novel (I am quite embarrassed that I never have) every Joshilyn Jackson and Mary Kay Andrews novel that comes out, Anna Karenina, and NO MORE SELF-HELP books (what a waste of time and money.)

Here is what else I am planning that makes me happy.

First, last and always, I am going to love my daughters fiercely – I can't think of a better word than "fiercely," because I love them so powerfully and intensely that that is the only word that fits. And I am going to love them and





act like it, no matter what. Even if they mess up, because I mess up too. And after I tell them I am angry or sorry, depending on the situation, I will also say, "I love you to the moon and back and infinity and beyond." That is what I always text from the plane before I take off. Because that is what love is. You only have control over the love you give, and to squander that is pure foolishness.

My daughter once said that she hopes she has friends like mine when she grows up. I am going to treasure those friends like jewels, my chosen family. I am about to go to the nearly yearly get-together of my best college friends. Sometimes those get-togethers are around the marriage of one of our children. This one is not. When we are together it is like we are 20 years old again, bowling, eating out at classier places than in college (places like El Pollino and Catfish Cabin in North Louisiana), dissecting the drama of our lives and still discussing "Who shot J.R.?" We watched Dallas a lot in college.

My brother makes me happy and he is my friend, more so than when we were little

and fought about everything. I've lived so far away from him and I want to see him more as I grow older. He's the link to my whole life.

I have friends who are or have been more than friends. Enough said there. They have made me very happy.

I am going to live in the South again, or at least have a second home there. The South sometimes still has a deservedly bad rap, but after having lived quite a few places, I can tell you with some certainty that what is overt there is just covert everywhere else.

My people, kin and not, live there and it is the most beautiful place in the world. I am going to the Gulf Coast a lot (I already said that, but it is worth saying again) to eat oysters and swim in the emerald-green water. I would love to work at Sundog Books in Seaside, Fla., if they would have me.

I am going to make quilts for people I love. They won't be perfect. My quilting teacher said that if you can't see the mistakes from a galloping horse 6 feet away that no one will notice. But people will remember me (fondly, I hope) when they sleep under them and know that I was



Photos courtesy of author



thinking of how much I loved them the whole time I was making them. That's what I think about when I sleep under the quilts my mother made for me. My girls love that I have sewn a patch of material from my night gowns into their quilts.

Someday I am going to spend a month or three in Paris. It feels right to me, like the South, and there are fleurs-de-lys everywhere, like there are in New Orleans. And although I try not to be very pretentious, I do love French perfume and Hermes scarves and I love to walk into the Hermes store like I own the place, even though I am just a rural Southern girl at heart.

I am going to write letters, with real pens and paper. I treasure every handwritten thing I own, especially from my parents and my daughters. When did email become a form of conversation and a way to work out disagreements?

I am going to move (not exercise). I am going to love my body a lot more and not be rigid with what I expect of it. My triceps are getting awesome, thanks to Kevin the trainer. My shoulders and hips are strong, thanks to the multiple ortho docs at UNM and Anna the physical therapist, who is also kind of an emotional counselor as well. I gestated and gave birth to two children and fed them food my own body made – a miracle! How could I have ever been so critical or accepted criticism of a body that did that?

I am always going to have a dog. Fancy dogs tempt me, but scruffy rescue dogs are what tug at my heartstrings. I fostered the little puppy that found my daughter – he was in a terrible state when he jumped in her car. She couldn't have animals at her house when he came into her life, so he lived with me temporarily. He brought incredible joy and playfulness into each day. It was hard to give him back, but he is hers and I pick him up and we go for a Starbuck's puppacino every so often.

Three months ago I went to the animal shelter intending to adopt a calm 3- or 4-year-

old dog and came home with two 7-week-old puppies ("Louie" for Louis Armstrong and "Lay-la" for my favorite Eric Clapton song). And they make me happy. We walk two or three miles a day and have lots of discussions about work. They usually they give me the best advice, which amounts to, "Chill out and play with us."

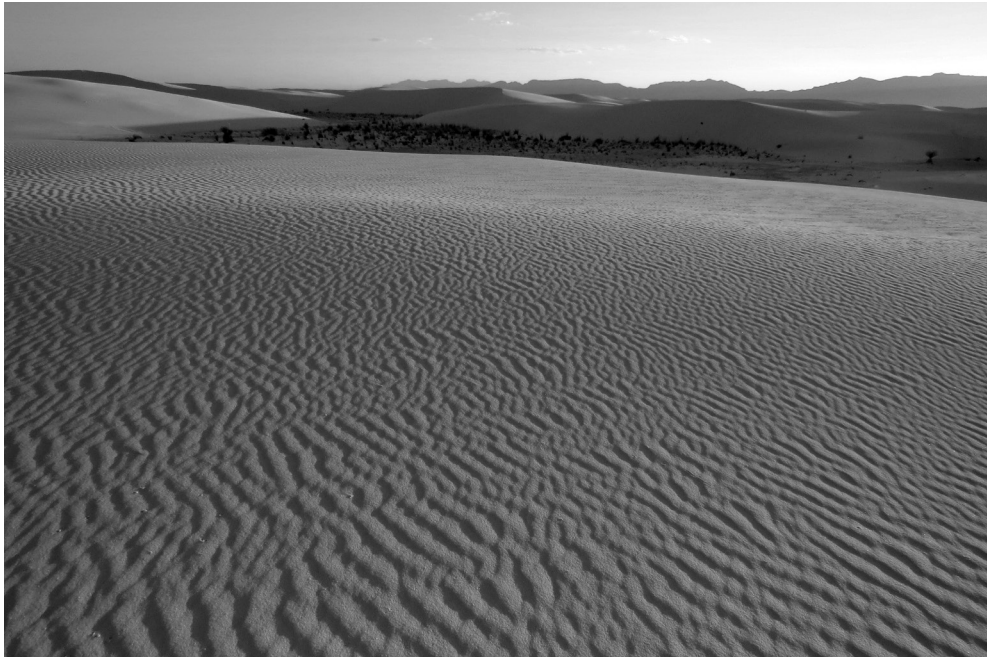
For now, I am going to keep doing the work that I love and that gives meaning to my whole life. The best days are the ones I can take a step back and see how lucky I am to have work that can make a difference, and that is most days.

Medicine is hard these days, but where else can you get so energized and feel so blessed to be a part of other's lives – patients and learners and colleagues? I passed my Family Practice board exams last year, and that is probably the last time I will ever take that nasty thing.

Twenty-five years, more or less, but such a short time, really. I measure years by how quickly each Christmas and each beach vacation rolls around. And they are coming closer and closer.

I have come to understand that I sometimes delayed my own happiness in service to others. I don't think that is a bad thing, for the most part, but over the next 25 years, I plan to be a force to be reckoned with, both for myself and for others. I will say what needs to be said. This girl is on fire (thank you, Alicia Keys) and she has a happiness bucket list! ♦





Photos by Adam Quinn Kludt





## Breathe the Silence

Breathe the silence.  
Even as the tumor takes away her breath  
I have no words.  
Medicine fails us now  
we share the moment  
we dance in awkwardness  
stumbling  
words escaping me as time escapes her

Finally,  
a deep breath  
What do you hope for?  
Silence.

I haven't considered it much  
but I think to be home  
to be rid of this pain  
to find better moments.



I know the final path,  
    how she will die,  
but now how we live becomes more important  
    and we seek the words to make this so.

The day ends  
    I exhale into the solace of the sunset  
        my future approaching.  
Finishing, what do I hope for?  
    Home.  
    Morning losing the shroud of night  
    the penumbra fading  
    the mesa exulted, glowing.  
    To always hear the sizzle of the sun over the silence of the piñon  
    and to breathe in the darkness as the endless pathway rises in the sky.

Music.  
Loud, raucous perhaps,  
shouting down pain  
until the music of the planets carries me off.

Touch.  
The electricity of years,  
of memories projected through synapses  
vividly  
still there  
the warmth of her hand.

Words.  
Someone to say  
    What do you hope for?

– Tom Himelick

# The Losses

They say that caring for a loved one with  
Alzheimer's is a slow, quiet loss.  
But sometimes, reality roars toward me so fast  
my heart pounds  
my breath grows short  
and I do my best to not get run over.

That's when the losses seem breathtaking.

Sometimes it's the slow things  
watching his chivalry fade  
his guitar gathering dust  
his participation in life grow quiet.

Sometimes it's the big things  
role reversals  
the stooped gait  
the vacant look.

Tomorrow I am removing danger by  
taking away his car and car keys.

In his eyes, I am also ripping away  
his role as a father  
his role as a man  
his pride and independence.

He won't understand.

Because he cannot remember what he  
cannot remember.

– Sherry Reeder, DNP





Photos by Jonathan Bolton



## Betadine Times Two

By Lilliam Aguilar Clinger

Between my first and second year of medical school, I returned to my home country to attend an international practical immersion experience at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Hospital General San Felipe in the capital city of Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

I was under the supervision and guidance of several local physicians, as well as seventh-year medical students (equivalent to third-year medical students in the U.S.) from a local public university. A typical day began at 6 a.m., when I attended lectures with the medical students.

What was fascinating about these lectures is that the students taught them. The attending physician would assign the students readings as well as resources in the beginning of the rotation to prepare for their presentations on various topics. The experience was humbling. All of them misspoke or omitted important information during their presentations, and the class would be approached to remediate this. If no one did, then the attending physician would lecture briefly on the matter. This active learning style resulted in teamwork and camaraderie amongst the students.

When lecture ended at 7 a.m., I would go to either ultrasound clinic, benign gynecology clinic, or to the operating room. It was during these clinical experiences that I noticed the most striking differences in health

care between the U.S. and an underdeveloped country like Honduras.

At ultrasound clinic, there was only one reusable hand-size towel to cover patients for their modesty during the exam. People, whether health care workers or not, would walk in and out of the ultrasound room during a visit unannounced. They would not ask permission to be there, introduce themselves, or even acknowledge that the patient was there.

During ultrasound and benign gynecology clinics, I immediately noticed the medical staff did not wash hands between patients – not even when the main attending was performing vaginal exams and/or pap smears. The only time that I observed either physicians, medical students, or nurses diligently wash their hands was when they were about to perform a surgery in the O.R.

Even then, at times no tap water would be available in Tegucigalpa, so no one could wash their hands. However, the health care staff did use new gloves (albeit not always sterile gloves) when starting to work with each patient.

Not surprisingly, there was not enough medical equipment at the public hospital for patients, let alone medical students. I had to purchase my own disposable gloves, face masks, bouffant caps, and shoe covers – items that I have never purchased before during my training in the U.S.



An interesting encounter at the Hospital General San Felipe made me realize the severity of the medical supplies shortage. We were inserting a type of contraceptive called an Implanon (as Nexplanons, the newer version, are not affordable) inside a patient's left arm. I was assisting the main attending with this procedure, pumping Betadine, an antiseptic solution, from an old plastic pump bottle onto a cotton ball to clean the insertion site. Suddenly, the nurse and the physician rapidly shifted their attention toward me and told me to immediately stop. They warned me that that old bottle was all they had and they had to make the best use out of it. I had only pumped the bottle twice.

Labor and Delivery consisted of only two rooms that had no vents or air conditioners to ameliorate the odors coming from the combination of amniotic fluid, emesis, stool, and sweat present. The only room that had a vent and air conditioner was the one operating room available for the whole OB/GYN department at this public hospital in the capital city.

The delivery room, which was about a third of the size of a laboring room at UNM, consisted of four antique birthing chairs where vaginal deliveries would happen simultaneously. The room was so small that the father of the child could not witness the birth of his son or daughter. These birthing chairs were kept "sterile" in between patients by covering them with black trash bags. If all birthing chairs were occupied, then the patient would deliver in the laboring room, which was slightly bigger than the delivery room, yet was filled with eight side-to-side hospital beds. If there was no space in the laboring or delivering rooms for a delivery, then the patient would be delivered in the tight hallway connecting these two rooms.

While I assisted a medical student, who was performing a vaginal laceration repair in a patient, two impending deliveries came in simultaneously. All available beds were occupied, so they were both in the hallway. While the attending, medical students, nurses, and

clinical staff were trying to find these women a better location, I heard one of them shriek in pain while a gush of fluid splashed against the wall in front of her.

Everyone's attention immediately shifted to her and they started looking for gloves to assist her, but no one stayed next to her. In a matter of seconds, she delivered a baby that bounced several times on the bare, metal hospital transfer bed and stopped a few centimeters from the edge of the bed. I often wonder what I would have done had I been unoccupied.

Although it took me a while to get used to the tight space in Labor and Delivery, what perplexed me most was the proficient skillset that I observed in the local medical students when performing vaginal deliveries and laceration repairs. They were often doing these unsupervised. I asked them when they had learned to do these procedures. They informed me that they had begun delivering babies since their fourth year of medical school (equivalent to the senior year of pre-medical education in the U.S.) due to the physician shortage in Honduras.

Despite the differences in health care between the U.S. and Honduras, the hard work that the staff performs daily at Hospital General San Felipe is admirable. I am proud of them. They assist and save lives with the bare minimum. There are far more patients than medical staff available, yet they do not stop until everyone has been helped.

Medical students are on call every four days, regardless of scheduled examinations. The students have only one restroom available for them, which consists of a broken shower and a toilet that had to be flushed with a bucket of water. There are no call rooms available for them to sleep in and rest.

Yet amid all the chaos, the beauty of medicine at this public hospital in Tegucigalpa lies behind the power force that pushes forward the health care of hundreds of Honduran citizens. ♦

# Death comes again

I so tire of death  
Darkness around the corner  
Floating in the evening air  
Hiding in the dark

Hallways of sadness  
Flowing with loved ones in pain  
Inevitable endings  
Warm tears on cold hearts

If death comes tonight  
It is of no consequence  
Sink deeper into the fog  
Futile gasps for air

I feel the cold  
Alarms vie for attention  
Body and soul in retreat  
Sun sets one last time

Now let me go home  
Cloak of death please embrace me  
I wait for you patiently  
I so tire of life

– Brian Solan





Adam Quinn Kludt



Adam Quinn Kludt



Adam Quinn Kludt



Christina Hoff





*Forever Chasing*, José Sandoval



Gary Smith



Jonathan Bolton







*High Hopes*, José Sandoval



Jonathan Bolton



Christina Hoff



Zachary Jacobs





*Thor's Hammer, Zachary Jacobs*



Lynn Lessard



Zachary Jacobs



# j44 + a drum brake & 2 pills

- 1 summer in the city but no shooting stars
- 2 just notifications from KOB 4
- 3 amber alerts\abusive scars
- 4 sand\blood through flying cars
- 5 no use for waiting room bars but
- 6 never thought they'd take it this far:
- 7 slashing sports while guns go off
- 8 more worried about boots & tows
- 9 than car theft at Eubank & Menaul
- 10 around here a lot of heads to the ground
- 11 correct code \$ = % by the #
- 12 lights flashing violent spotlight
- 13 no place to die except the bus stop
- 14 drugs ~ Central/should i look up?
- 15 waiting for someone to save this thought
- 16 nobody's that heroic
- 17 tick tock tick tock
- 18 lights lights lights
- 19 some say there's a malibu ambiance  
at night
- 20 sirens catch you at the intersect
- 21 like a 3.3 break that doesn't shift right
- 22 this city a rebel whose mind doesn't settle
- 23 beauty/rage|sunshine\desire to threaten
- 24 no city sanctuary but refuge in the prison
- 25 the rest of us paying fines and can't find  
the vision
- 26 hallelujah
- 27 praise the almighty
- 28 just txted you from the I-40
- 29 on the phone w/911, don't hang up
- 30 500k+ stories all waiting to be spoke
- 31 reviving la metro with the 10/3 vote
- 32 dope shoot yayo
- 33 alpha to omega in the sky
- 34 dreamers running out of time
- 35 while duke city falls still the most high
- 36 we can use peace so hit me with a \$5
- 37 eyes on horizon look for paradise
- 38 within this text you can't identify
- 39 logic has come back to life
- 40 angled and bent PHI
- 41 they keep saying open your mind...
- 42 got a new conviction full of re:vision
- 43 sent from my iPhone X –
- 44 44 bars to deal truth live and direct.

– Katherine Elwell



## Sisters

I am you, You me  
A cooperative protection, a sharing of genes  
And memories, and true love  
Unconditional – like nothing else  
Your glasses reflect my eyes, my nose  
Underneath the rims  
My lips, my hips . . .  
Your voice is mine  
No one can tell us apart on the phone  
Neither can we  
Not even mother  
I am you, You me

– Jessica Phillips





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## An Alphabet of the Heart

By Chuck North, MD

**T**he inspiration for An Alphabet of the Heart comes from Dr. James R. Doty, author of *Into the Magic Shop; A Neurosurgeon's Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart*. I saw an opportunity to complete the alphabet that he started.

This list is meant to be used in daily meditation or prayer. Some may prefer to focus on one letter, several letters, or the whole alphabet. I don't have the patience for sitting meditation, so I recall it while walking, running, or swimming. This may complement other prayers and meditation practices you find useful.

Mindfulness meditation is the process of becoming aware of what is currently happening around the practitioner, as opposed to focusing on something other than the present.

It helps us deal with the distractions in our hectic lives.

Mindfulness meditation focuses on being and feeling, rather than thinking. It may include a variety of techniques, like following the breath. It can also be combined with body awareness and yoga as a method for mindfulness-based stress reduction. Experience supported by research suggests that mindfulness meditation reduces anxiety, depression, pain, and suffering.

Beginning with body relaxation and breathing, awareness is directed toward deeper feelings in the heart, letting go of mental attachments and worries. It can create a positive approach to life that focuses on the attitudes and feelings expressed in this alphabet. It centers the self and provides a guide to internal conversations, relationships and intention for loving-kindness in daily life.

**A** **Altruism** is the belief or practice of disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others. It is the motivation for people who want to serve those less fortunate. It is the driving force in the health professions. It leads to the performance of charitable acts. Much of our existence is focused on satisfying our basic needs and selfish desires. The practice of altruism not only improves the lives of other individuals and communities, it also enriches the life of the practitioner. We find meaning and purpose and are more fulfilled by reaching out to care for those in need than we are accumulating personal wealth and fame.

**B** **Beneficence** is action done for the benefit of others, whether helping prevent or remove harms or to simply improving the situation of others. Health professionals are expected to refrain from causing harm, but also have an obligation to help their patients through the practice of science-based caring. The pursuit of status and power too often interferes with the pursuit of happiness and meaning. Being mindful of the positive force of beneficence in daily life improves our relationships and communities.

**C** **Compassion** is the recognition of the suffering of another with a desire to alleviate that suffering. It is the active form of empathy. But to be compassionate to another, you must be compassionate to yourself. Many people beat themselves up by being overly critical, not allowing themselves to enjoy the same kindness that they would offer to others. Until one is truly kind to oneself, giving love and kindness to others is often impossible.

**D** **Dignity** is something innate in every person that deserves to be acknowledged and recognized. So often we make judgments about someone because of how they look, talk or behave. Many times such judgments are negative and, therefore, wrong. We have to look at

another person and think, "They are just like me. They want to be happy too." When we look at others and see ourselves, we want to connect and help.

**E** **Equanimity** is to have an evenness of temperament, under all circumstances. Even during good times there is a tendency to try to maintain that feeling of elation. Trying to hold on to the good distracts us from being present in the moment in the same way as trying to flee from the bad. Grasping at that feeling of elation is not realistic, not possible, and only leads to disappointment. All such ups and downs are transient. Keeping an evenness of temperament allows for clarity of mind and intention.

**F** **Forgiveness** is one of the greatest gifts one can give to another. It is also one of the greatest gifts we can give to ourselves. Many have used the analogy that holding anger or hostility against another you feel has wronged you is like drinking poison and hoping it kills the other person. It doesn't work. Ultimately, it makes you the prisoner in a jail where you hold the key, yet won't unlock the door. The reality is that each of us in our lives has wronged others. We are frail, fragile beings who at various times have not lived up to our ideals and have injured or hurt another. Forgive yourself, forgive others and feel the burden of anger and hostility lifted.

**G** **Gratitude** is the recognition of the blessing that is your life. Even with all its pain and suffering we are grateful to be alive. It takes little effort to see many people suffering in circumstances with little hope of a better life. Too often, especially in Western society, we look at one another and feel jealous or envious. Simply taking a few moments to have gratitude has a huge effect on your mental attitude. You suddenly recognize how blessed you are.

**H** **Humility** is an attribute that for many is hard to practice. We are proud of who we are



or what we have accomplished. We want to tell and show others how important we are and how much better we are than someone else. The reality is that such feelings actually reflect our own insecurity. We are searching for acknowledgment of worth outside of ourselves, yet doing so separates us from others. It's like being put in solitary confinement, which is a lonely place to be. It is only when we recognize that, like us, every person has positive and negative attributes that we can truly connect. It is that connection of common humanity that frees us to open our heart and care unconditionally.

**I** **Integrity** requires intention. It requires defining those values that are most important to you. It means consistently practicing those values while interacting with others. Our values can easily disintegrate and the disintegration can at first be imperceptible. If we compromise our integrity once, it becomes that much easier to do it again. Few start out with such intent. Be vigilant and diligent.

**J** **Justice** is recognition that within each of us there lives a desire to see that right be done. It is easier when we have resources and privilege to have justice. Yet, we need to guard justice for the weak. It is our responsibility to seek justice for the vulnerable, to care for the weak, to give to the poor. That is what defines our society and our humanity and gives meaning to one's life.

**K** **Kindness** is a desire to see others cared for with no desire for personal benefit or recognition. It is often thought of as the active component of compassion. The extraordinary thing is that research is now finding that your act of kindness not only benefits those who receive our kindness but benefits you as well. The act of kindness ripples out and makes it more likely that your friends and those around you will be kinder. It is a social contagion that puts our society right. Ultimately kindness returns back

to us, in the good feelings it generates and in how others treat us with kindness.

**L** **Love**, when given freely, changes everyone and everything. Love contains all virtues and heals all wounds. Ultimately, it is not our technology or our medicine but our love that heals. And it is love that holds our humanity. Understanding is the basis of love. To grow your love, strive to deeply understand one another. As Ethan Hawke writes, "Love is the end goal. It is the music of our lives. There is no obstacle that enough love cannot move"

**M** The age-old question "What is the meaning of life?" becomes a question of how to live a **meaningful** life. How do we find the seeds of joy, happiness, and meaning? Too many people spend their time pursuing superficial material things and transient pleasures. Wisdom traditions across the world agree that connecting to and serving others gives our lives meaning and purpose. We benefit from a daily practice of contemplating the feelings, thoughts and actions that give our lives meaning. Our intention to live life fully and effectively makes us better people and our communities better places.

**N** **New** thoughts, feelings, and attitudes should be embraced and explored deeply to open our minds and hearts to fully engage and enjoy the richness of the physical and spiritual worlds and maximize our potential as sentient beings. New relationships enrich our lives and can brighten our hearts. Rigidly following old ways can limit us in engagement with a rapidly changing world full of possibilities. Embrace the new and grow into a wider awareness of the self and the world.

**O** **Openness** to other people, ideas, and feelings allows us to travel down the road to conscious awareness of the vast possibilities of human experience. Being open can make us more compassionate in a world more connected than ever by electronic communication.

Closed minds are fearful of change and cannot benefit from the fertilizer of new thoughts and feelings. They are more susceptible to propaganda, hate, and false narratives. Openness is a prerequisite for growth, humility, and understanding. Open minds seek truth and beauty wherever it can be found. Openness can melt the heart while expanding the mind.

**P**atience opens our hearts and minds to new ways of thinking, feeling, and relating. It allows us to connect with our own deeper thoughts and experiences by slowing our reactions and reminding us to be kind in our interactions. Impatience is the hallmark of our busy lives and limits our ability to relate to others. It can foster misunderstanding, appear to discount the kindness of others, and create unnecessary divisions. Patience allows us to appreciate the wonder, beauty, peace, and harmony in the world. Patience is required for self-reflection and mindfulness practice.

**Q**uiet is precious in our over-stimulating, wired world. Quieting our minds, bodies, and souls is both a prerequisite and consequence of mindfulness practice. Loud, chaotic environments require us to find sanctuary as we seek love and meaning in our daily lives. If you find yourself doing all of the talking in a conversation, watch the other party tune out. What do you learn when you talk and don't listen? Quiet is necessary to truly listen and learn from others. Try being quiet for two minutes in a conversation. It can open your heart, reduce your stress, and enable a warm and compassionate connection.

**R**espect is a feeling of deep admiration for someone elicited by his or her abilities, qualities, or achievements. Respect is not selfish and resists envy and misunderstanding. By being respectful we can learn and grow from admiration of others who may be mentors and role models. Respect for vulnerable people is the basis for practicing personal and social justice

in the pursuit of equality of rights and opportunities. Disrespect leads to conflict, harassment, exploitation, violence, and even war and genocide. Respecting life in all of its forms can lead to a broader and deeper consciousness of beauty in the world.

**S**“God grant us the **serenity** to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” Taken from the 12-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous, The Serenity Prayer can be powerful in reducing anxiety and compulsion to behave in self-destructive ways. Troubled, anxious and insecure people find it harder to focus on needed changes. Regardless of your spiritual beliefs, have the courage to change the things you can once you have let go of the things you cannot change. Seek wisdom by mindfully reflecting on the difference.

**T**rust is the firm belief that someone or something is reliable. It is the bedrock of authentic, caring relationships. It is too often violated in the pursuit of personal power and wealth. To trust others, we too must trust ourselves. Reflect on your personal integrity and fidelity to your values. Trust your beneficence and practice trusting others. Trust can be contagious if it is freely offered.

**U**niversality means a right or service available to all in society. In practice, universality should lead to wider associations when thinking about human rights, opportunities, wealth, power, health care, and wellness. Caring and serving your narrowly defined social contacts is not bad, but it limits you in your ability to spread kindness to others who may have greater need. Not only do more benefit when universality is considered but you also grow by reaching out. When meditating about universality, widen your thoughts to those who exist at the margins of your life.

You will become more magnanimous and conscious of the breadth of humanity.

**V** We are obligated as mindful, compassionate beings to protect the **vulnerable**, and at the same time need to foster our own vulnerability by sharing our weaknesses with those we trust. It is a privilege to be intentionally vulnerable with others. It opens us up to accept acts of caring to better our physical selves, as well as our psychological well-being. Men are often taught to be strong and guard against vulnerability in relationships. Being vulnerable and strong are not mutually exclusive. Prideful, defensive and hard-hearted people may miss out on personal growth and intimate relationships by being closed to others. Indeed, being vulnerable increases one's strength of character.

**W** To **walk in beauty** means something like shalom in Hebrew or being in a state of grace in Christianity. Walking in beauty is being in harmony with everything around you, recognizing the beauty of everything you see, even for those things that may not seem conventionally beautiful. It is a core belief and practice in the way of the Navajo (Diné). If we do not pay attention, it is easy to see only hate, ugliness, and fear around us. Being mindful of beauty allows us to appreciate that we are connected by a simple and beautiful coexistence, a web of being and support that gives us meaning.

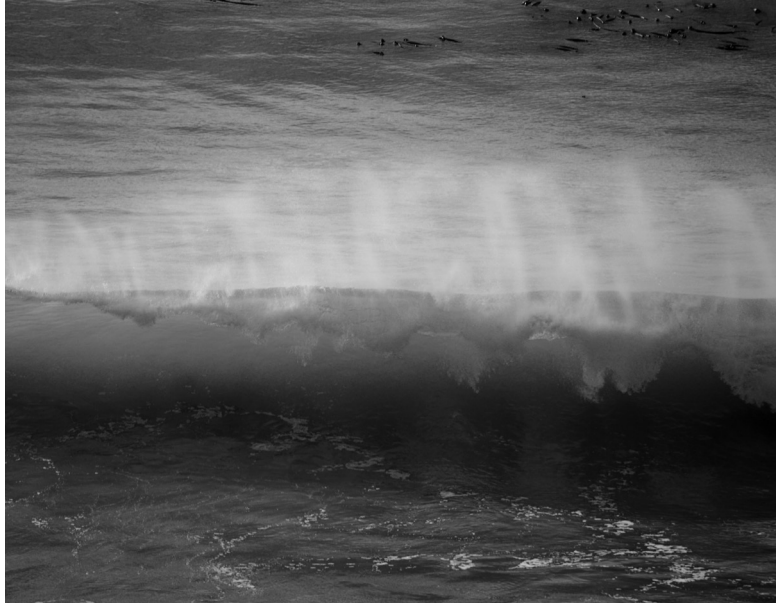
**X** **Xenophilia** is an affection for people who are foreign and unknown. By being mindful of our common humanity despite superficial differences, we can learn from the experience of others. Openness to new and varied practices helps us understand appreciate virtue and wisdom from other traditions. Loving others who are different increases the capacity of our hearts and makes us more compassionate and respectful to our loved ones and ourselves. The mindful practice of xenophilia may reduce pain, suffering, disease, and death resulting from wars, racism, and hate. Think about how

you can contribute to world peace, justice, and equality by reaching out to those you don't yet know.

**Y** **Youthfulness** may imply a lack of knowledge and experience, but it captures the innocence, hope and enthusiasm of healthy people at any age. We strive to be young at heart, but also wise from experience. The young show us that those who want to remain open to personal growth shun rigidity and hypocrisy. We are attracted to the young and seek their support and company. They seek mentorship and education from those more experienced and wise. Being mindful of the passion and hopefulness of youth can make our hearts more aware of the possibilities available at any age. Appreciate the young. They will care for us as we age and become more dependent. Youth is not wasted on the young if elders embrace youthfulness in their hearts.

**Z** **Zest** for life means having great exuberance. Too much of our time is spent being depressed and despondent or hopeless and helpless. We are attracted to optimistic people who see a path forward to improvement regardless of ability, social class, or age. Zest can be contagious. It is the basis for action after mindfully meditating or praying from the passions in our heart. May you all find some zest in your daily lives and find the energy to make ourselves, our families, our communities, and our world a better place to live, love, work and play. ♦





Adam Quinn Kludt

## Dockham Shores

Windswept whitecaps  
lap the shore of  
Lake Winnepesaukee.

“Great Spirit” guides  
green water against  
pontoon boats  
anchored at angles  
along wood-planked docks.

Tall birch trees wave  
bending branches –  
browning leaves waiting  
to be shed.

Abandoned Adirondack chairs  
face each other like  
friends you can lean on.

Another summer slips by  
in the setting of my youth.

– Lynn Lessard



Zachary Jacobs



Lynn Lessard

# Where Babies Come From

My mama was so lonely there in her  
life at 35, her brains and beauty unrecognized,  
that she couldn't see me, couldn't sense me,  
couldn't even imagine me.

But, I imagined her, sensed her, saw her,  
and dreamed her. I made my journey through the cold  
sky and between stars to join her, to cuddle myself  
deep inside her womb.

I was more than a surprise to her. I was  
an intrusion. (Mistakes, others call children like us . . .  
and there are many of us.) My mama had no husband,  
only this warrior girl determined to be. I thought  
it silly, that she would not see how she needed me,  
as much as I needed her.

Her blindness frustrated me.  
Yet undaunted, through a web of tissue and blood the  
color of pomegranate juice stains on pale skin, I slid from  
my mama's womb. She embraced me, as a duty, still  
believing she had no love to give.

Then, nights as she bathed my soft  
baby skin or checked on me before sliding into her bed  
alone after a hard day at work (her sweetheart,  
my father, long gone),

Winter days when together we waited for  
some bus, mama turning my face into the warmth of her  
coat, holding me against her body, protecting us both from  
the cold, evenings when I started dinner with her recipes,  
or when she told me that I was beautiful and smart.

When eventually all her girlhood family,  
my grandparents, aunts and uncles, were dead, finally, as  
I helped her return to the stars from where she herself had  
come, every time my mama loved me even when  
she couldn't love herself: in each of those  
moments, she very quietly saw the  
wisdom of my way.

– Karen Hohnstein



# Say it in Six Words

By Badger House, School of Medicine Learning Community

Over the last year, students of the Badger House were challenged to write their current medical school story in six words. The project, under the direction of Dr. Michelle Bardack, was inspired by Larry Smith's Six-Word Memoir Project. Smith launched the Six-Word Memoir Project online in 2006. It has published more than a million stories (sixword-memoirs.com). Below are a few of our students' six-word stories:

## MS-1

"When can I take my nap?"  
– Macarthur Jones

"I hope I remember this tomorrow."  
– Dominick Byrd

"Eat. Sleep. Go to class. Repeat."  
– Ryan Sun

## MS-2

"Be positive, be curious, be there."  
– Tim Abeyta

"No Sleep, No Time, No Regrets."  
– Joseph Pagador

"Beginning to know I don't know."  
– Rachel Franklin

## MS-3

"The only easy day was yesterday."  
– Larry Benjey

"Not worth it. Until it is."  
– Eric Rightley

"If only I had more time..."  
– Fernando Sinaloa

## MS-4

"Life happens. Perseverance is necessary. Match!"  
– Mary Irving

"Changed heels of boots two times."  
– Francesca Garcia

"As it's learned, less is known."  
– Bryant Richlin Shuey



Morguefile.com

## The vessel

So critical is our highway system  
For feeding our organs and tissues  
And avoiding many bad issues

Yet, we speak little about it  
Focusing on organ functions and tests  
While leaving much more to address

When it comes to supply  
Vessels are job one  
And healthy blood helps get the work done

We can lose our lives, our function  
If our blood clots due to vessel problems or coagulation  
And gets stuck, much like our troubled nation

Underuse of anticoagulation  
Leads our blood to stagnation  
And continues to ravage the nation

– Mark T. Holdsworth, PharmD

# Hello, how are you?

I never know what to answer  
when someone asks, "How are you?"

I look forward to the consistent  
replies of others.

"Just fine, thanks."

"Alive and kicking."

"Very well, and you?"

My friend with Parkinson's disease  
doesn't know either. He says,  
"Each morning is a surprise."  
So sometimes we say nothing or  
we save the truth for people we trust  
to hear our worries, pains,  
and undone ambitions.

I see you are the trusted ones.  
My right shoulder hurts.  
I'm having a tooth pulled on Wednesday.  
Her back hurts.  
Her knees hurt.  
She has to get a new washing machine.  
His balance is not so good.  
His mother died in October.  
His truck is in the shop.  
There's an oil spill in the ocean.  
The power went out in the storm.  
They've stolen money from the trust account.

Is there a litany of good things?  
Ah, I see your faces and recognize you.  
You're the physical therapist, the dentist,  
the primary care doctor, the appliance repairman,  
the cane maker, the funeral director,  
the explosion expert, the telephone pole climber,  
the money finder.

You ask, "How am I?"  
"Good thanks, I found a new beautician."

– Jeanne M. Favret



# Ten Things I Wish I'd Known When I Started Medical School:

## Some Tender Advice for Incoming Medical Students

By Julie Culkin

**B**ack before medical school, I was a competitive horseback rider. I thought it would be a great idea to work on a breeding farm delivering babies in exchange for a horse baby of my own. When I started school, I had a 3-month-old filly who was full of fire. I overlooked the obvious point that I had never raised a horse before AND, I had never been in medical school.

Late that fall I realized I had been ignoring my horses. I decided to pay them a visit with the goal of teaching the filly how to stand tied. When I tied her up, she immediately reared up on her back feet and caught me right on the forehead with her front legs.

It was a wakeup call. I was trying to do too much. So instead of spending a thousand dollars a month not seeing my own horses and fretting over it, I gave them away.

But by third year, I realized I needed to reevaluate my priorities in order to feel balanced and found a way to add horses back into my life. I rode a friend's horse, for free. Not surprisingly, third year was the best year of my training.

The take-home from this is that you should find a way to integrate the things you enjoy into your new life as a medical student. Some of my classmates still played soccer, ran half marathons, mountain biked, rock-climbed, you name it. You might not be able to do it with the intensity that you once did, but it doesn't have to be all or nothing.

One of the two things I remember from orientation (yup, only two things) was a faculty member talking about how the School of Medicine is committed to graduating every student who matriculates. That really resonated with me. It said, "You are here and a part of this

family of medicine. We will do whatever we can to keep you here." So when you feel like you're struggling, know that you're not alone and have so many resources. Ask for help.

And when I say ask for help, I mean ask for help with clarity. In second year of medical school, my resiliency was tested by a series of events. My father was diagnosed with lung cancer and passed six months later. I lost a friend and I almost lost a sister. And on top of it, I was returning with a 9-month-old baby after a year off for maternity leave.

I called my brother for support, as I often did, and he responded with generic, "You're the toughest person I know, you'll get through it" statements. These bland responses were not what I needed. I decided to talk to him about these feelings recently and he said, "I thought all you wanted me to do was listen. You didn't tell me you needed help."

In my mind, I thought it was obvious that I wanted help dealing with our family, but I never asked. So, if you are wondering why people around you aren't helping you, step back and make sure you have asked for help ...

Now I will briefly get on my soapbox, so bear with me. As Type A premeds, we don't walk through life; we run. You might notice that there is an underlying feeling that there are two types of people in the world, those with mental health problems and those without.

This, my friends, is completely wrong. Maybe you believe that the world is divided into two types of medical students: those who pass tests and those who don't. This, my friends, is completely wrong too. I am here to tell you: You have this amazing brain, but sometimes, sometimes, that little voice inside your head (not voices, mind you), can get the best of you.

You might tell yourself you don't belong here. You might fail a quiz and think you are the only one to ever do so. You might struggle with anxiety or stress or depression and feel shame. Don't believe everything you think or feel. The majority of us have failed a medical school exam and are still here to tell the tale. We are all insecure in some way, some of us are just more obvious about it than others.

Your training is just starting, but before long, you might believe that your training life in medicine is endless. Try to remember: nothing lasts forever. Know that your training will be stressful, babies will be born and lives will be lost, people will suffer. The amazing thing is you will get to help them through it. So with all of this in mind, here are a few things I picked up along the way (some of which I have done and others I wish I had):

- 1 Be flexible. On Sunday afternoon, when you are weighing the risks and benefits to attending your niece's first birthday or studying one more hour, go to the party. One more hour of studying is not going to change anything.
- 2 Be kind to yourself. Know when to listen to that critical voice in your head and know when to shut it up. We all have that critical voice, but sometimes it may get the best of you and you may need help quieting it.
- 3 Find a way to be you. Wear those funky socks, be that competitive athlete, daughter, son, friend, spouse, etc.
- 4 Exercise, regularly. You will see that sometimes you will fall out of the exercise pattern. Work hard to always find your way back to it.
- 5 Always find a way to do work that is meaningful to you. For me, this was working with mentors seeing patients in my first year. Yes, there is time.
- 6 SLEEP at LEAST 7 hours, seriously. Sleep is so important.
- 7 Know when you have fallen off the horse and when you should get back on. Sometimes that's not right away. It's important to know when you need a listening ear or when you will need help forming a plan of action. When you don't know what you need, reach out to others.
- 8 Live. You will never get back your twenties, so that doesn't always mean go out and drink. Seize the moment. Travel. As Lee Lipsenthal said, "Enjoy every sandwich."
- 9 Read something other than a textbook (seriously, you have time). They are called audio books, listen while you run.
- 10 When things aren't working out, reassess and ask for help. Just like when you're in the OR and cannot get an airway, step back, reassess, ask for help. And just breathe.

Things will come in waves, and they circle back around. Limit your sacrifices. Know your warning signs. Sleep, study, exercise and find time for everything else. Be flexible: it's not medicine and nothing else.

Say no when you need or want to, but sometimes say yes. Be kind to yourself as you become privy to the suffering that is part of the human existence. Ask for help when needed. And remember, you can find time to ride a horse. ♦

*Special thanks to Dr. Jeanne Bereiter, Dr. Elizabeth Lawrence and my sweet family.*





*Spear Rock, Gary Smith*

